The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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A Song in June.

Calm in his chamber the dead man lay,
Shrouded and hid from the face of day.

All fair things in the world outside
Smiled in their fulness of summer pride.

Trees he had loved in his broad demesne,
Stood in their mantle of summer green.

Flowers he had tended, lived and grew,
Welcomed the sunlight and drank the dew.

Children—his own—with prattle and play
Filled the long hours of the sweet June day.

Children too young to grieve or weep,
Knew not the depth of his long quiet sleep.

Day wore on, and the clear cool night
Fell like a veil, with lessening light.

Night passed by, and the pale dawn broke,
Sleeping earth from her slumber woke.

Through the death-chamber, by sound unstirred,
Trembled the song of a woodland bird—

Song as delightsome, and glad, and free,
As a ransomed soul's in heaven might be.

And the mourner—the wife who had lost and loved,
Felt half the weight of her woe removed.

For she said: "'Tis an angel sent to tell
That with my Belovèd all is well."

After the night of weeping, she slept.
God save all such who such tears have wept!

God send His angel blest to tell
That with their dear ones all is well!

J. C. HOWDEN.

Christ Sifting His Followers.

SERMON BY THE

REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

"*From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.*"—JOHN vi, 66.

I spoke to you last Sunday about the desertion of Christ by the greater number of his disciples—what it was and in what manner it took place. We saw that about the middle of his ministry Christ was obliged to make his position sharply defined to those who surrounded him, and to clear his way of all useless and false followers. His object was to train a type of men who should hand down after his death a religion which should seize like fire upon the hearts of men; and for that reason they were bound beyond all else to love his character and his truth.

There were many who had joined him from greed—because they did eat of the loaves and were filled. There were others who had joined him because of signs and wonders—a sinful and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. Of these two types of character, and how Christ tested them, and why they left him, I spoke last Sunday.

There were other types whom I mentioned among the disciples of Christ—whom he tested, and who, being tested, were forced to reveal themselves, and to depart. They too could not love enough. And yet the first of these of which I speak seemed to have plenty of love, seemed to overflow with enthusiasm. They

were those who were attracted to him by the beauty and tenderness, by the emotion and charm of his teaching, by all that we call sentiment, by the poetical and the ideal. All their feelings went out to meet Jesus, and more especially when his ministry was yet young, before the shadows closed around it. The bright outdoor life lived in the fields and on the lake; the preaching on the mountain side; the crowds in the sunny streets; the band of young disciples; the ravishment and mystery upon the Master's face; the charm that made his words subdue all hearts; the greater charm that hung around his acts; the tender way he had with men and women; the stories he told which enlightened common life, which made the animals the friends of man, and all Nature vocal with God; the sacred passionateness which filled the whole—these things lured round him all poetic hearts. They loved his words and works, they loved himself.

How was Christ to sift out of all these those whose love was really worth keeping? "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest"—cried one of them—swept away by impulse. Then came the test—"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." "Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,"—cried another, swept away by the charm of his words—and the answer and the test was the grim parable of the supper, "How camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment." "Blessed be the womb that bare thee"—cried a woman, thrilled by the beauty of his ways—and he sternly said—recognising the mere drift of impulse, as worthless as it was unenduring underneath the words—testing home—"Yea, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." Yes, he tested all these flittering fluttering souls who fled to and fro between passion and indifference—between impulse and its fading; who began their easy love without counting the cost, and ended it as easily without counting the pain they gave; whose devotion to him was the idle pleasure of an empty hour; whose love for his truth was like many a friendship offered to us in life, fit for pleasure, but not fit for pain; and whose constancy to what they took up with eagerness was led away, now by this thing, now by that, exactly as the sentiment of the moment moved them; always believing they could do this duty, or succeed in this business, until the duty appeared on the rocks above their path and said—"climb up to me;" until the business said—"take trouble to learn me,"—when they sighed and cried—"I am tired, I am not well: the climb is too steep, I did not expect this trouble; let me rest; stay and take care of me." And so turned in a moment quite refreshed to something else.

Of what use were folk of this kind to Christ? What good could they do in carrying out the mission that Paul and Peter carried out before the Sanhedrim and the tribunal of the Cæsar? They were seed sown on the shallow ground—and he knew well they would wither in the blaze of persecution, and snap like brittle steel at the first frost of trial. Not to them was to be entrusted anything; not on them was love to be wasted, only pity; not to them, indeed, was to be given the task of preaching the truth, and dying as martyrs. So, he tested them, by leading them into a sterner region than that they led their petty lives in, by bringing them face to face with an austerer loveliness which they would have to work to win, whose smile—which, when won, would illuminate all earth and Heaven—was only to be gained by righteousness that had endured hardness, and love that had been salted by fire. He made clear to them that his life was not all spent by the pleasant shores of the summer sea of Galilee, but also in the wilderness with the wild beasts and with the tempter; that his crown was rarely the crown of flowers, but the crown of thorns; that apparent defeat was the end of all their effort, the defeat of the Cross—that strange misery shall be theirs, companionship with the guilty, the hooting of the Roman world, all that seemed unpoetical, unideal. Victory, indeed, if they could see it, joy unspeakable, and full of glory, peace that passed understanding, the uttermost ideal of love and holiness—but not *their* thought of victory, not what they wanted; not outward, not the pleasure of the passing thrill, nor the joy of the swift emotion—but inward, hidden in the depths of God, to be found in eternity by going through the gate of sacrifice and death. "If any man will follow me," he cried, "let him deny him-

self, and take up his cross daily." The ideal—what was it worth, if there was not an unbroken struggle to realize it? The poetic—what was it worth if it could not go down into common life and glorify it? The tenderest emotion—what was it worth, unless it could be unflinching in trial, enduring against allurement, strong against the swift rush of evil impulse? The beautiful—what was it worth, unless it was found deepest in duty, most enthralling in dying for the Truth?

And they could not bear it. From that time forth they walked no more with him.

And our religion, our Christianity—of what value is it, if it is of this type? Does God care for it more, do you think, than we care for friendship or for love of this character? When we lay at His feet, with a light air, this artistic theory we call religion, this poetic feeling only which shrinks from writing itself down in action, this dainty, slothful sympathy which spends its pity on the life of Jesus, and regrets the fate of the Apostles, whom it would probably turn from the door if they came to ask admission—how does God feel, do you imagine? Greatly pleased with all our fine fancies and fine feelings, when we cry—"Lord, Lord, have I not taught in thy name? and in thy name done many wondrous works!" No, indeed—stern and cold is his reply—"I was sick, in prison, a stranger, and ye visited me not—Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me. Depart from me, accursed!"

It is not only when the dread account is made for each that this is done. Then these mere dreamers hear and know their sentence. But it is given and wrought out in this life. Here, in this very hour men are driven out from work for God, from the life which is of Christ. They have accustomed themselves to be the victims of impulse, to drift from feeling to feeling, to soar in the barren ether of theory, and lo—all in a moment—they are asked to act, to do some difficult duty, to make some sacrifice of will, to lay by some self-indulgence, to give up some pleasure that another may be happy, to curb their own impulse for the gallop over the meadow, and to plod along the dusty road of common duty; to turn what wearies them, but which is right, into pleasure by doing it with a heart—and they will not do these things because they say they cannot. They are tested and they break beneath the test. They go away and walk no more with Jesus. Therefore, in that very hour, could they hear it, the judgment has gone forth, not to be reversed till all their life, nay, the very fibre of their character, is all reversed—"Depart from me, accursed."

Well, well did Christ, who wanted true souls for his work, test these false diamonds, and prove them paste. So far for these.

Another class were those who followed Christ because he was so great a moral teacher. "Here is one," they said, "who keeps the commandments, whose conduct is pure, who realizes the righteousness which is according to law. And our life is well regulated, our stated duties are all performed, no crime or sin we know of rests upon our conscience; therefore, with this man we shall be at ease, accepted, and when he comes to his kingdom, we shall be accounted worthy. Some of these men were noble of heart, and their blameless life opened their eyes to the blamelessness of Christ, and when they saw it, they loved him, and passed on to the ideal life with him. Yet some of these, like the young ruler, broke down beneath the test. Others were not so noble. Of rigid morality, of strict observance of the letter of the law—they were without love, and being without love, were of consequence steeped in pride. Such was the Pharisee whom Christ sketched in the temple, who boasted that he was not as others, and despised the publican; and such was he who shrank from the sinful woman that washed the feet of Jesus, and whose whole character comes out in the words—"This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner."

This latter class he had scarcely need to test. They gathered round him at first, thinking he might be such a one as they were. But they soon felt the love that was in him; and as they saw it touch the class from whom they shrank, it acted on them like red-hot iron on living flesh. It burned them to the quick, and they hated him for the pain it gave them. They felt themselves to be whited sepulchres, and they abhorred Jesus for the revelation. Heaven

and hell were not more separate than Christ and these moralists, without love and without humility. Some of them, however, he did test, and with grim irony. He brought them into touch with publicans and sinners; he violated before them the letter of the law for the sake of keeping its spirit—and they turned away with disgust and horror. But for the most part, he kept no terms with them at all, but told them with indignant plainness what they were—a generation of vipers, children of the devil, hypocrites, murderers. And well it would be if in these modern days—when we are so mealy-mouthed as to be sometimes indignant with Christ for using expressions which we do not think quite courteous,—whenever the rigid and cruel Pharisee, or the haughty professor of Christianity, or the equally haughty professor of an atheistic morality, condemned the lost, and exiled from God the sinner—resting themselves on law and not on love, on conformity to maxims and not on mercy and justice,—there were some holy, and just, and tender enough to turn upon these vile creatures of hatred and say to them (however the world may be at their feet) as Jesus said to them of old—"Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye do." With these, then, he would have nothing to do: and would that now the Christian world were clear of them. They are the enemies of Christ and of Humanity.

With the others who broke down under the test it was different. Jesus loved them. They were near the kingdom; yet, in spite of their high morality and purity of life, when they saw and heard the Master, they were disturbed. Something touched them into discontent with their life. The satisfying of conscience only did not satisfy. That they did not steal, or kill, or bear false witness, or tell a lie, seemed not enough to fill their desires. The voice of the world said to the young ruler—"O, excellent young man!" The voice in his own heart said—"What lack I yet?" and the cry was so strong that it drove him to Jesus, and brought the words out of his heart upon his lips. It was the obscure unconscious passion for the ideal life—that cry of aspiration towards the infinite, which of all troubles is the most impassioned, which, like love, no waters that flow upon this earth can quench; the desireful longing which makes the moral life alone appear like dusty prose; the awful, spirit-driven, insatiable cry which, rising like a man from the dead out of the deepest recesses of the heart, lifts up its hands in a passion of prayer and claims the eternal life—"My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"

There are many who tell us that they can root that craving out of humanity. Let them try for centuries with every effort of their soul! They will never make the slightest progress towards its extinction. It comes to thousands who know not what it is. It urges them into the infinite reaches of the moral law. It takes them beyond the furthest reaches of the moral law into the region of the spirit, where the highest emotion translates itself instantly into the highest action. There it asks them if they can breathe its air and live its life. And whether they can, depends on the reality of the love they possess, of the capability of sacrifice within them. For *its* ideal demands its form.

To this class of followers Christ applied a twofold test. *First*, he doubled the extent of the moral law by spiritualizing it—that is, by making it arise in the heart instead of being imposed from without; by making its demands depend not on outward rules, but on the voice of the individul conscience; by making Love, not Law, lay down its limits and its imperative. All the questions of casuistry vanished immediately a man felt that what *he* thought to be right he must do, and what he thought to be wrong he must not do. *Secondly*, he led his followers into the ideal world of religion.

As to the first, the examples are on almost every page of the Gospel. I do not speak of the passages in the Sermon on the Mount, they are well known.

But take this—"How many times have I to forgive," said Peter, "until seven times?" thinking himself wonderfully good, and having had much debate in himself whether it would be wise to extend forgiveness so far beyond that which common morality demanded. Do you remember Christ's outburst in reply, in which he swept the question in a moment into the infinite of Love? Seven times! Is it irony, or natural amazement at any limitation of forgiveness that sounds in his words? *Seven* times—

nay, seventy times seven; any number of times; so long as he sins against you.

Take a larger lesson. "Whom am I to love? My own family, all my friends, or even all my own class? or do you say all my own countrymen? There I suppose we stop; but, good Master, lay down some limits, let me have something clear, out of the vague. Pharisee, Lawyer, and Scribe have been at the question for years nnd years. How far am I to love?" And Jesus smiled and said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. This is the Eternal. This is to be of the character of God, for your Father maketh the sun to shine upon the just and unjust."

Foolish folk! Love has no limits. Come out of maxim and rules, step into the infinite. This was the test. He spoke to them words which only the heart could understand, words which only those could receive in whom morality was becoming a spirit and a life, a union with the infinite righteousness of God and with all its passionate outgoings.

Take another instance. There were two brothers who quarrelled about an inheritance. It was more a legal than a moral question. "What is his right, what is mine?" they said. "Let the law decide, if you cannot agree among yourselves," would have been the prudent answer—and practically Christ gave that answer when they approached him as if he were a civil judge. "This is not my realm," he said, "but another's." "Who made me a judge or divider over you?" But when they still appealed, and spoke to him as the perfect Teacher, he took the question out of the court of law into the higher court of the heart right with God, into the eternal nature of the soul. "Take heed," he said, "and beware of covetousness." That is the root of your quarrel. Get the love which does not desire to grasp but to give away, and your difference will be at an end—and then, still more, there is yet a higher view, a principle which once felt as a master thought of the whole life, will change life from top to bottom, and make all these legal fightings impossible. "A man's life"—his real life—"does not consist in the things that he possesses."

That is the kind of test which is every day, at home and abroad, applied to men who are moral men. Can you rise out of self-contentment, out of saying—"I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all I possess"—into aspiration; out of the outward conformity to the Law, into the inward life of Love which fulfils the law in passing; out of the limited ranges of social morality into the infinite of forgiveness; out of the negative goodness which breaks no law laid down in letters into the rightness of the heart, which cannot break the Law because it loves the character of the lawgiver? If you can, you answer the test of Christ, you are fit to teach his truth as his disciple.

But the practice is difficult, though morality is made simpler. And it is only love in the heart which can fulfil it. Therefore, there are thousands who have not yet got far enough in that slow development by which human character grows into the perfection of the Father. They cannot bear the test. They are like people who have been sailing on an inland lake; who know every tree and every flower that grow upon its shores, but who, tested like this, are swept out of their secluded shelter and hurried into the boundless ocean. Their course before was clearly mapped out, they need do so much and no more; but now, unless they could rejoice in the beauty of morality developed by Love, they must either sink in the depths of the ocean, or pray to be put back upon their narrow pond again.

That was the case with thousands who came after Christ, and heard him thus extend morality. They could not bear it; it was too hard for them, they could not understand it. They went away and walked no more with him.

O, men and brethren, will that be the case with you? When God opens to you the infinite, will you shut yourself up in the finite; when he opens his temple filled with the light of Love, will you pass all your time upon the threshold? If you wish to enter in—get Love into your heart—no matter whether you can quite understand as yet all that he demands of those that enter. Neither Peter, nor John, nor any of the Apostles as yet understood the Lord, but they loved him; they trusted him; they believed in his character; and afterwards they understood him. But from the first their love was so great, that even though they did not understand, they turned to him in childlike reverence, and cried—"Lord, to whom shall we go; thou hast the words of eternal life?"

Here and There.

The annual Whitsuntide gathering of the clans at Essex Hall, and elsewhere, was accompanied by a great banging of the Unitarian drum. The recent controversy on "Two Opposing Tendencies," started by Mr. Fripp in the *Seed Sower*, gave the signal for every speaker to protest, by all his gods, his love for Unitarianism. That their might possibly be something broader, more Catholic, more attractive in its comprehensiveness, sweeter in its charity, than our dogmatic "ism," never seemed to dawn on the minds of our eloquent brethren. The perfectly legitimate plea that our churches stand for certain truths as well as freedom, degenerated into the assumption that *Truth* means our own opinions. That we should proclaim our own opinions as *Truth*, and dogmatise about them first and last, appeared to be the peculiar instruction of the great sermon at Hampstsad.

The usual meetings were preceded by an unusual gathering of the National Conference, called to consider Mr. Steinthal's resolution, adjourned from Sheffield. This resolution, it will be remembered, proposed that the committee of the Conference should be endowed with certain powers and functions, making it the organ and voice of the churches, and that it should regularly meet to consult on the welfare of the churches, and to declare the mind of the churches on such public questions as enter into the field of social ethics. The language of the resolution was more guarded than this, but that this was its scope and meaning was plain from Mr. Steinthal's speech.

There is very little difference of opinion among us as to the desirability of bringing our churches into closer fellowship, and providing for them some means of collective expression and collective action. There are two conceivable ways along which we may advance to this end, the Ecclesiastical and the Missionary. We may create a body, or committee, or council, whose functions shall be ecclesiastical, or semi-ecclesiastical, and nothing else; or we may create a body which shall bring the churches together along the line of the actual church extension and missionary work they are already doing. One is the line of conference, consultation, advice, pronouncements; the other is the line of closer union for labour. The first was represented by Mr. Steinthal's resolution, the second by Mr. Wood's amendment. The conference chose the ecclesiastical line, and thereby made a great mistake, a mistake, however, which was partly due to the haste with which the business was scrambled through. The chairman's ruling that no one was to speak more than ten minutes made it quite impossible to explain fully and clearly the larger policy set forth in the amendment. The notion that you can deal with a grave and important subject in snap-shot speeches of ten minutes each does not obtain anywhere except in religious assemblies. What would be thought of a judge who ruled that the leading counsel on either side of a difficult case must not speak more than ten minutes?

There are many among us who feel a strong objection to setting up a body whose function shall be first and chiefly — if not solely — ecclesiastical. Ecclesiasticism has been the curse of Christendom. The least intrusion of the ecclesiastical spirit is to be regarded with jealousy by our free churches. It is quite true that the names and record of the men who supported Mr. Steinthal preclude the idea that they have any leaning towards ecclesiasticism. But the question is not of the purpose of the men of to-day, but what such bodies as the committee contemplated tend to become. When a committee's only function is to advise, it is apt to give advice before it is asked; when its only duty is to consult and make pronouncements, and to be the voice of the churches, it is apt to assume to itself authority. In its estimation "advice" soon spells "control." Having no definite work of a useful kind, it is tempted to make work for itself of a mischievous kind. On the other hand the amendment proposed the safer line of a union of unions, or a Council of the various local associations, which should meet first of all to consider the great questions of Church Aid, Church Extension, and Missionary Labour. On such council would naturally devolve in course of time the duty of speaking in the name of the churches, and of being the organ and voice of the churches. But this would be secondary.

However, the Conference having chosen the ecclesiastical line, it remains to make the best of the decision. But this demands a certain reform in the constitution and procedure of the Conference which must be faced. If the Conference Committee is to be the voice of the churches, their friendly adviser, the guardian of their interests, it must be elected by a constituency which represents the churches, and the churches only. A distinction will have to be made between the delegates of churches and the representatives of charities, trusts, boards, societies, which are independent of the churches. To the former alone must be given the duty of electing a committee which is to speak in their name. The mixed character of the Conference may be retained for all purposes of conference only, but when it comes to appointing an executive to stand and speak for the churches, the churches have a right to say to the other bodies, "This is our business, and ours alone."

Further, we are sure it will be found necessary that the Conference should meet annually instead of triennially. It is both absurd and dangerous to give any committee the right to speak in the name of the churches for three years unchallenged. In three years the whole complexion of things may alter. New questions may come to the front, old questions may take on new aspects, social, educational, and ethical problems may all wear quite another face. Any committee that is to speak for the churches, or advise them, or in any way represent them, must be in constant living touch with them, and the best method for securing this is by annual election at annual meetings. Such meetings might very well be held in the Autumn and in our provincial towns, leaving the B. and F. in possession of the Spring for its gatherings.

A Case of Improvidence.

"You must teach your people thrift," said the vicar. "Thus you will develop self-respect in them; and out of self-respect will grow other virtues, and you will find them better prepared to receive the doctrines of the Church."

He pushed back his armchair and rose. The members of the district visitors' meeting also pushed back their chairs, shutting up the black notebooks with a cheerful sigh.

"The vicar is so sensible and practical," they said to one another as they walked home; "and this new plan of his to encourage saving through the collection of pence by district visitors is really excellent."

Then the ladies of an optimistic nature had visions of Paradise Gardens and Beaconsfield Buildings, and all the other slums which they conscientiously visited every Tuesday — real gardens and beautiful buildings, a new heaven and a new earth, regenerated by means of the steady exercise of thrift and the possession of little bank books. The pessimists shook their heads and said that the vicar was a dear good man, but he was young; he had yet to learn that nothing ever made any real difference to the parish of All Saints.

* * * * * * *

Mrs. McCarthy sat in the damp and dismal underground hole, which she called her kitchen, and meditated. There was a little pile of coppers on the dirty table, and another heap of artificial lilac flowers which would not be ready to take to the warehouse for a week yet. Mrs. McCarthy thought it over. She was so anxious to please that cheerful young district visitor in the creamy blouse and the pretty little brown shoes, who dropped in and talked to her on Tuesdays. With much mental exertion she had come to have a vague apprehension of the savings scheme which the visitor, with earnest incoherence, set forth to her. "She's that interested in it," said Mrs. McCarthy, "and I can spare 'em." "And how do you know as you'll ever see them pennies again?" asked Mrs. Johnson, who lived on the top floor and was inclined to cynicism. But Mrs. McCarthy had faith in her kind, and especially in a district visitor with such a bright face, which looked more like a summer afternoon in the country than anything else—not that Mrs. McCarthy put her thoughts into these words, but she had had the happiness of living in the country for a year or two of her childhood, and she knew that she felt better after an interview with her visitor. For a time she was not troubled by that irrepressible desire to go and have a drink at the "Queen Victoria" round the corner.

Mrs. Johnson came downstairs worried and miserable. "How's Freddy?" asked the flower-maker. "'Twon't be much longer, I'm thinking," said her neighbour. "The doctor he came this mornin', and he didn't seem to think as he'd need to come any more."

Mrs. McCarthy's sympathies were roused, she was a woman that had "had nine and lost seven," as she told the young visitor last week.

"Isn't there nothin' as I could get? she asked; "anything as he'd like to eat?"

"He's gone past that," answered the other. "Just to moisten his lips with a little water or milk—that's all as I can do now. An' I must go back to him." She went to the water-tap, and filled the broken-lipped jug she had brought. "If I could afford it, I'd get him a flower; he was always that fond of flowers. But I shan't have no more money till Saturday, and you can't get no credit, not for flowers." She lifted her jug, and went slowly up the stairs with a hopeless face.

Mrs. McCarthy looked again at the little pile of coppers. Tenpence. And the young visitor would be so pleased. It was the largest amount Mrs. McCarthy had as yet contrived to keep for Tuesday afternoon; and she really had taken a great liking to "the young woman as comes round for the savings bank;" and the sum in the little bank-book was mounting to three or four shillings already; it meant a Christmas dinner. For the first time in her experience Mrs. McCarthy was beginning to feel the pleasure of property and the desire of accumulation. She climbed the dingy stairs as quietly as so cumbrous a person could, and looked at the bed in the corner. The child opened his eyes and tried to smile. Then he seemed to ralapse into unconsciousness again. The two women looked at one another, but neither spoke; there was nothing to be said. The basement tenant went down again, put on a battered bonnet and a shawl, picked up the coppers, and departed; there was a florist's within twenty minutes' walk.

The young lady of the beautiful, fresh-looking, creamy blouses called the next afternoon in the course of her duty. She came into the house and sat in the grimy kitchen, and talked to the two youngest McCarthys, who were not yet of an age to be sent out of the way to the nearest Board School; and she was very severe with Susannah McCarthy.

"Not one penny?" she said; "oh, surely you will put one or two into the bank; you know, you promised me that you would try never to let a week go by without *some* saving, if it was only a penny. And your book was getting on so nicely; see here." Mrs. McCarthy was so busy poking the fire and putting on the kettle that she could not see the open entry-book, marked Susannah McCarthy in large letters, which the pretty young lady displayed.

The district visitor went away discouraged. "Really, Miss Yorke is quite right," she said to herself; "there is no doing anything with these people; and that woman behaved so well at the beginning. I am not sure whether it is worth while to go on." But Susannah McCarthy was standing again amongst the rickety furniture of the top-floor room. The little child lay straight and white now, and there was a stem of white June lilies in his hands.

"He was so happy with 'em," said the mother, looking on with a certain pleasure in the beauty of the dead child. "He just laid there and looked at 'em, after you brought 'em, till he died. I put 'em in a jug of water, but I thought he should have 'em in his hands now." So the lilies went into Freddy's grave, the only beautiful things he ever possessed in his brief life.

* * * * * * *

The young district visitor happened to be at the vicarage on the day of Freddy's funeral, and she related her disappointment in the case of Mrs. McCarthy.

"Yes," said the vicar, "it is very depressing to find, as our experience grows, how improvident the poor are. I had thought of putting as a motto on the savings books those words from the Gospel of St. Matthew—you remember?—'And His disciples were indignant, and said: "To what purpose is this waste?"' but, unfortunately the context is inappropriate." A.J.C.

We owe some of our greatest gifts to the unknown and the obscure, whose names have perished. Who wrote the Epic of Job? Who compiled the Psalms? Who first invented an alphabet? Who first thought of the plough? These things have blessed the world even more than the steam-engine and the telephone.

A Liturgical Experiment.*

This is a most interesting and suggestive book. It has been compiled by the Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A., primarily for the use of the congregation worshipping at the Church of the Messiah, Birmingham; but also with the hope that it may contribute towards the ideal Liturgy which, we believe, will some day form a real bond of union between our Free Churches. In his preface Mr. Jacks emphasises the point "that the unity of a Christian congregation comes neither from the use of a distinctive name nor the profession of a distinctive creed, but from participation in a common act of worship." It is thought that the bond which unites individuals may also unite Churches, and that we may find in some order of service, upon which we can all agree, a common meeting place and a common mode of devotional expression. Whether it is possible for a group of Churches like ours to join in the use of a Common Book of Prayer is a doubtful point. At the present moment things point in an opposite direction. It is becoming more and more the custom for each considerable Church to have its own hymn book and its own service book. The cheapness of printing, the strong individuality nourished by our free thought, the preferences of ministers, the isolation of our churches, all combine to make united action in any form of worship increasingly difficult. Yet it would be miserable not to keep the ideal before us of Free Churches, varying on many doctrinal points, still united in the deep sympathies and common expressions of worship.

These services are for the most part Biblical in language. They are six in number, and each service contains three sections, each illustrating some truth, or aspect, or aspiration of the religious life. Thus, the first Order has alternate passages for the minister and the people on the Light of God, the Law of Life, and the Commandments of Jesus. The three sections of the second Order are—the Temple of God, the Call to be Perfect, and the Religion of Jesus. The sections of the last Order are headed—the Compassion of God, God and the Spirit, and God and the Church. For these various subjects the Bible has been ransacked from beginning to end with admirable results. These services shew immense industry in selecting the scripture passages, great skill in their arrangement and combination, and a fine sense of the true and beautiful in bringing out the aspects of the one truth contemplated in each part of the service, and in providing responsive utterances of the soul as affected by the divine idea. Sometimes verses and portions of verses are interlaced, constituting a piece of Biblical mosaic, yet saved from scrappiness by the one idea running through the whole of the separate portions. This part of the work has been excellently done, with a fine appreciation of devout things, and under the impulse of devout feeling. Each service has a short prayer, at once reverent, simple, and beautiful, while a place is left for the minister for prayer. The music to which the congregational responses are to be sung is printed with each service, although it is a draw-back that the responses and canticles have not been pointed, as many of them are to be sung to ordinary chants, which call for the careful making of the reciting note.

Our ministers will find this book a most valuable addition to their treasury of devotional literature. It strikes out an original line, and whether widely adoped or not it cannot but be a powerful factor in building up that ideal Liturgy of which we have already spoken. We welcome it as a great gift to our churches from an earnest, spiritual mind.

* "Six Orders of United Worship for use in the Christian Church." Printed at the Guild Press, Birmingham. Copies at 2s. 6d. each can be obtained of Mr. P. Green, Essex Hall Book Room.

The Country Faith.

Here in the country's heart,
Where the grass is green,
Life is the same sweet life
As it e'er hath been.

Trust in a God still lives,
And the bell at morn
Floats with a thought of God
O'er the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
And the crop grows tall—
This is the country faith,
And the best of all.

—NORMAN GALE.

"A Day in the Country."

We believe there are thousands at this season whose longing for a holiday is so great that they would willingly compound for every possible mishap, provided only they might have the immeasurable delight of setting off, as free from trammels as John Gilpin's horse, to bound away into the bright, fresh world which lies outside their daily round of toil and turmoil. Above all, what children feel about a day's "outing," it is almost impossible for middle-aged mortals to recall. How, when we heard a rumour that such a holiday was in question, our little hearts beat and our feet voluntarily performed saltatory evolutions; and how we adored the kind people who were going to take us, and dreamed every intervening night of all that would happen, or—horrible nightmare!—that we were somehow forgotten and left behind! How we counted the hours and watched the clouds, and added little surreptitious petitions to our evening devotions that it "shouldn't rain on Saturday;" and how, when the great day dawned, we sprang up awake, with the exquisite idea that we were really and truly that very day going to—what did it signify where?—the seashore, or the forest, or the fields—it was all one to us: our bourne for the day was our Morning Land, our Eden, our Mount Meru, the goal of all pilgrimage—Heaven upon earth. If we were rich men's children, we were perchance carried to our destination in swift rolling carriages, which had no charm of novelty for us; but much better, if we were poor, did we glory in being packed tight and rosy as so many strawberries in a basket, in some delightful van, with flags on the roof and green boughs on the horses' heads, and then borne away—away out of the dust, and the smoke, and the too familiar streets—into that wide, boundless Paradise where there were hedges and ditches, and birds and wild flowers, and where we might roll in the sweet grass like colts in a meadow.

Only a child knows what the joy of such things is to a child. By the time we have gained the skill to put our impressions into words, the dew is gone from them. Only we can remember how once it was revealed to us how beautiful and glorious was the world, and, like "Aurora Leigh," each of us can say—

> "Then ankle-deep in English grass I leaped,
> And clapped my hands—and called all 'Very good.'"

Alas! for the childhood that has no such memories—not even a few summer day's oasis of green in Life's long dry wilderness. Alas! that such power of enjoyment—so immense in its little sphere, and so absolutely innocent—should remain ungratified, and fade away till the dull days come, when the wild flowers lose half their charm, and woods are no longer mysteries of delight, and the poor drudge loves better to sit and sip his brain-stupefying draughts in a pot-house, than to roam the meadows of an earthly Paradise! It costs so little, too, this "Day in the Country!" About one shilling and fourpence a-head, for instance, we are informed by many a committee, is needed to take 300 children into the Forest, the "happy hunting grounds" of the East-end, and give them "a good dinner and tea;" and other benevolent folk ask a few pence, more or less, to go to one or other of all the delicious places round London. The price of an early peach, or of a glass of Château Yquem, or a couple of Havannah cigars, or the difference between a shade wider lace on the trimming of a bonnet—this counterweighs to one small atom of humanity, first, a week's rapturous anticipation, and then a whole long day's ecstacy. The time is pretty well passed by when people objected to happiness as an educational instrument, and thought, on the whole, that gloom and dulness, and severity, with the frequent exhibition of the rod, were the proper methods for cultivating the affections of the heart and improving the keenness of the moral perceptions. We have at last begun to note the fact that Providence has made lambs to skip and kittens to play, and every new-born creature to make little foolish runs and rushes, and bounds and somersaults, expressive of the simple truth that it finds existence a joy, and that to breathe the air, and see the sun, and crop the grass, or imbibe its own sweet food, is to be happy without more ado. It has come to be pretty generally understood that little boys and girls are not so unlike other small, young creatures, but that what is good and natural for the lamb and the kitten is good and natural for them likewise. Only we do not quite know how to put our discovery in practice. We have

plenty of dismal school rooms, but not one playground to a score of them. We have abundance of slates and books, and birches, but a dearth of hoops, and balls, and kites. We gather our poor waifs and strays out of the lanes and courts, to teach them A B C, but we fail to teach them a practical acquaintance with those earlier elements of education, daisies and buttercups, robin red-breasts, and water-wagtails. A child's education can no more be considered complete when it knows how to read, write, and cipher, but has never seen a corn-field or a wood, than it can be considered well fed when it is stuffed with salt beef and never eats bread and milk. Some little time ago, a benevolent lady, teaching in a Sunday School in London, asked her class, What was Wheat? Not a boy had ever seen such a thing in his life! Having explained what "wheat" signified, the lady continued: "Of course, then, you do not know what Chaff can be?" Greatly to her surprise, up went every little hand in token of intelligence! "Well, boys, if you know what Chaff is, tell me." "Impidence, ma'am," shouted the whole class in chorus; thus testifying that every child was well up in slang, while, perchance, not one had ever beheld that loveliest sight of merry England, the golden field, with its fringe of dark green elms, and the corn waving in the wind. Poor hapless human London sparrows! Even the demoralized little feathered bipeds, we imagine, sometimes take a flight as far as Highgate or Richmond; but the gutter-child—who is there to take its slip-shod feet off the pavement, and set them where the soft, fresh grass shall seem to him a carpet fit to roll in rather than tread on? It is for us older ones, who can remember something of our childhood's holidays, to think about it. Whatever may be our distrust of this set of philanthropists or another,—whether we fear that one party will instil Calvinism with cake, or another Ritualism with bread and jam, or a third inspire a latitudinarian bias by the aid of muffins or a brass band,—in either case we have our resource; for every shade of theology known to England has got its school, and would fain, we hope, have its school holiday in the country. After all, it may be questioned whether even the Shorter Catechism or the Church Catechism, learned in the sternest of school-rooms, will tend to the "edification of the young in Godliness" much more effectually than a sight now and then of God's own beautiful world, and a rush of that most wholesome sentiment—spontaneous gratitude for real pleasure. At all events, when those who have abundance of this world's goods go off, a few weeks hence, to their country-houses, or to the sea-side,—to climb Alpine peaks, or follow the grouse over Scotch or Yorkshire moors, we do not think any of them will enjoy their long holiday the less for the reflection that they helped two or three little boys or girls to one grand day's pleasure before the bright summer drew to a close.

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

After a Long Winter.

A spirit touched the earth,
And where he lighted, marvels sprang to view;
The grass-blades and the leaves burst forth anew,
And flowers had their birth.

He roused the birds to sing—
They chorussed wild and sweet from every tree;
He breathed upon the streams and set them free,
Unbound the mountain spring.

Swift grew where'er he trod
Veronica, "true image" of the sky,
All Nature's precious jewels, violets shy—
Amethysts on the sod.

Dew diamonds, too frail
To bear the sun, buttercups, beads of gold—
Daisies like pearls. Over the orchards rolled
A sea of petals pale.

A spirit touched the earth,
And cried, "Awake! for I am here at last.
Awake! for I have blown my clarion blast;
Awake to joy and mirth!"

THEODORA MILLS.

May, 1898.

Sarcasm is an edge-tool, and a fool mostly cuts himself when he uses it. In the olden times the fool was not allowed to carry anything of the nature of a knife, but was armed with a sword of lath; and a sword of lath is to this day all that he is really able to wield.

Manchester College (Oxford) Letter.

After a long bout of hysterical alternations between laughter and tears the weather seems at last to have been favoured with a lucid interval. Nature, having done her Spring cleaning with conscientious thoroughness, has now put on her Summer things. Oxford is at its best, and the most prosaic of us is beginning to think he has it in him to turn out a sonnet. The natural man would like to be reading "Undine" in some sweet seclusion far up the Isis, but a mysterious destiny has doomed us to hunt up references concerning the beasts of the Book of Daniel. In other words, examinations are upon us, and the *Seed Sower* letter must be dismissed with scant courtesy.

We have to record with extreme regret the departure of Mr. Löfi for his home in Hungary, owing to a breakdown in health. Having completely won the sincerest affection of all the students, he goes away with our best wishes for a speedy recovery, and a long life of happy service in the Unitarian Church of Transylvania. Through his departure the College has lost a genial presence, and the Shakespeare Society a good-humoured and active Secretary, ever ready to pour into our ears the love ditties and wild war music of an ancient and proud people.

Once again Messrs. Morris and Co. have been busy in our chapel—this time in decorating the organ pipes after a beautifully subdued and chaste design. For this further embellishment of an already beautiful interior, we are indebted to Mr. Buckton, the generous donor of the organ itself.

The 216th meeting of the Discussion Society was held on Wednesday, March 9th, the president (Dr. Drummond) in the chair. There were present thirteen members and eight visitors. Mr. Thomas moved—"That this House, whilst admitting that Scholarship should by no means be neglected in Theological Colleges, is nevertheless of opinion that first importance should be attached to the cultivation of preaching power." The motion was opposed by the Hibbert Lecturer, and a lively debate ensued, in which Profs. Carpenter and Upton and Messrs. Wickstead, Shaw, and Hall took part. The mover then stood up on his hind legs and prophesied. It was well that he made use of his brief opportunity, for he had no sooner sat down than the calm logic of the president finally demolished his case. As a sop to the mover, however, the House considerately carried his resolution by 7 to 2.

The 217th meeting of the same Society was held on Wednesday, May 11th, when Mr. Alfred Hall, B.A., moved—"That this House condemns the active part taken by ministers of religion in political questions which have no *direct* moral or spiritual bearing." There spoke Messrs. Betham, Wickstead, Shaw, Thomas, and Carpenter. After the fury of the previous debate there was apparent a mild, sweet reasonableness in this. The president, having summed up, the motion was put and lost by 3 to 2.

The Martineau Club continues to flourish with unequivocal success. The 7th Meeting was held on Friday, March 4th, when the club entertained a large number of guests, including several distinguished members of the University. After dinner and the usual coffee and cigarettes in the J.C.R. the meeting adjourned to the Senior Common Room, where Prof. Percy Gardner's highly-suggestive paper on "The Evangelists as Men of Letters" was heard with much interest. The Professor prefaced his paper by professing his consternation at the presence of so many senior members of the University, comparing himself with a team come to play an eleven of undergraduates, suddenly discovering that the undergraduates had hired two professional bowlers. The President (Mr. Odgers) at the end of the paper, invited Mr. Randall and Mr. Bartlett each to taken an "over," which they did with great effect. Dr. Drummond and others also contributed to the discussion, and after Mr. Gardner had replied he was heartily applauded by the company.

The eighth meeting of the club was held on Friday, May 6th. Mr. Arnold S. Ward, of Balliol, a son of Mrs. Humphry Ward, was unanimously elected president for the forthcoming session. Prof. Carpenter read a paper on "The Way of Virtue according to a Chinese Carlyle," in which he gave an interesting and humorous account of Lao-Tse's character and philosophy. An interesting discussion followed and the last meeting of the session then terminated.

The Social Union has experienced a wonderful revival and promises to become one of the most popular institutions attached to the College. The recent meetings have all been well attended. We are fortunate, on the retirement of Miss Beard from the secretaryship, in securing the services of Miss Toulmin Smith (our librarian), who has that art of the ideal hostess of making people interesting to each other, always shown in her own pleasant afternoon gatherings, which it has been the privilege of the students from time to time to attend.

Mr. C. S. Loch, the well-known secretary of the Charity Organization Society is Dunkin Lecturer for this term. A number of gentlemen both cleric and lay, as well as a large contingent of Oxford ladies have attended these lectures. Mr. Loch conveys the impression of great earnestness, combined with the possession of an immense accumulation of material. It is impossible to listen to him without gaining a sense of there being great issues at present little felt by the mass of charitably disposed persons. His maps and charts graphically illustrate a number of valuable and interesting statistics, principally connected with the administration of the Poor Law.

Those of us who will be here next session are looking forward to the Autumn Dunkin Lectures by Mr. Philip H. Wicksteed, M.A., who preached here on Sunday morning, May 15th, and later gave an address at Mr. Carpenter's house. His afternoon subject was of special interest to those who attended last term's debate on "Preaching and Scholarship," for his address was entitled "Scholarship and Life." Mr. Wicksteed pointed out the issues with extreme distinctness, and no one could have gone away from that pleasant gathering without feeling stimulated to work and impressed with the importance of scholarship in an age when the democratic conceptions of life threaten to blur the high ideal of learning. Other speakers at these "At Homes" have been Profs. Arthur Sidgwick and Muirhead (an alumnus of our College), and Mr. C. S. Loch.

On Sunday, June 5th, the Rev. A. N. Blatchford, B.A., of Bristol, was special preacher and in the evening a devotional musical service was held.

Mr. Hall has supplied the following report of the work at St. Ebbe's :—"The attendances at the evening services in Charles Street were very good during last term. One feature of interest was that Mr. E. W. Howse, B.A., of Mansfield College, officiated on one occasion, and other Mansfield students have promised their help for this term. During the vacation, Mr. J. H. Woods, B.A. was supplying, and both his own and Mrs. Wood's services were much appreciated. A concert given by the students and friends was well attended." Mr. Löfi having already left us, the out-going students are Messrs. Wicksteed, Homer, Shaw and Thomas. Mr. Wicksteed will be going to Padiham, Mr. Homer to West Bromwich, and Mr. Thomas to Liscard.

The out-going students are extremely fortunate in having secured the Rev. W. E. Addis, M.A., of Nottingham, to give them the welcome address at the Valedictory Service, and we are all looking forward with much pleasure to seeing him with us again at Oxford.

J. M. Lloyd Thomas.

The Word "Sentimental."

In the "Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott," recently published for the first time, the editor heightens the interest of the book by giving not only Sir Walter's own letters, but a selection from those of his correspondents. One of them was Lady Louisa Stuart, to whom had been early entrusted the secret of the authorship of the Waverley novels; and in acknowledging the receipt of "Old Mortality" Lady Louisa took the author to task for an anachronism in the use of a single word. Claverhouse in the first edition of that novel was represented as saying on one occasion that he "had no time to hear sentimental speeches," and the acute feminine critic pointed out that the word "sentimental" was not incorporated into the English language until some time after the period covered by the story. Scott acknowledged the justice of the criticism by removing the offending epithet from the second edition of the book ; but Lady Louisa might, had she so chosen, have enlarged the scope of her impeachment by pointing out that had Claverhouse survived to the time when "sentimental" became a coin in our verbal currency, he would certainly not have used it in a depreciatory sense. We are so accustomed to apply the term "sentimental" to a strained, unreal, or affected display of emotion as to make it difficult to realise the fact that this use of it is entirely modern, and that for many generations it was an epithet of compliment, not of reproach. Yet such is undoubtedly the case. It was thus employed in the second series of the "Curiosities of Literature," by Isaac Disraeli, who lived nearly to the end of the first half of the present century; and when in 1768 Sterne gave to one of his most famous books the title of "A Sentimental Journey," we may be quite certain that he used an epithet which he thought likely to commend the story to the reading public. It is indeed indisputable that before, during, and after Sterne's time, "sentimental" was employed eulogistically to characterise anything which appealed legitimately to tender and humane emotions; and that our contemptuous employment of it is, comparatively speaking, a novelty of usage.

How the degradation of the word came about is hard to say. Probably some writer began to use it ironically between inverted commas, expressed or understood, in the same way that such essentially praise-giving epithets as "pious," "respectable," and "orthodox" are often employed in current satirical literature, until gradually the general public, accustomed to its employment in this sense, lost consciousness of the original irony, and began to regard it as a term of reproach pure and simple. Archbishop Trench, in his fascinating volume, "The Study of Words," gives numerous examples of similar degradations — witness such words as "silly," "crafty," "cunning," "demure," and "plausible"; and it is more than probable that they have all originated in simple irony, the one figure of speech most likely to be misapprehended by "the man in the street" who really makes the language. But it would be interesting to know when and by whom "sentimental" was first used as an unmistakable term of depreciation. Perhaps some reader of this page who is collaborating with Dr. Murray in the production of his great Dictionary may be able to fill this gap in our knowledge.

We love Mendelssohn's "Songs without words." Oh ! for a Christianity without words —a Christianity which is a life, a grace, a character, a spirit, a sweetness like that of a rose in June, which speaks not and yet makes itself known to every passer by !

Golden Silence.

If chosen souls could never be alone
In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done.
—*Lowell.*

Thou are not the more holy for being praised, nor the more worthless for being dispraised. What thou art, that thou art; neither by words canst thou be made greater than what thou art in the sight of God.—*Thomas a Kempis.*

For whom the heart of man shuts out,
Sometimes the heart of God takes in,
And fences them all round about
With silence 'mid the world's loud din.
—*Lowell.*

God's voice is of the heart,—I do not say
All voices therefore of the heart are God's;
And to discern the voice amid the voices
Is that hard task that we are born to.
—*Clough.*

Through silence and the trembling stars
Comes faith from tracts no feet have trod.
—*Tennyson.*

"Is God less God, that thou art left undone?
Rise, worship, bless Him, in this sackcloth spun,
As in the purple!"—But I answered, Nay!
What child his filial heart in words can loose
If he behold his tender father raise
The hand that chastens sorely?—can he choose
But sob in silence with an upward gaze?—
And thy Great Father thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns in speechless tears both prayer and praise.—*Mrs. Browning.*

Neither Solitude nor Silence lack the power
To avenge their own insulted majesty!
—*Wordsworth.*

Blessed are the Peacemakers—and what a Peacemaker is Silence!

Only the waters which in perfect stillness lie
Give back an undisturbed image of the sky.
—*Trench.*

O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delvèd gold, the wailer's heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth his belovèd sleep!
—*Mrs. Browning.*

Religion depends overmuch on words—it should organise itself more on deeds than on utterance. The strong men are the reserved men not the babblers.

The world needs for its healing among other things a spell of silence.

The Great Miracle.

How great the miracle, if ne'er but once,
In all the ages, Spring had garnished earth
With such magnificence of beauty, spread
So lavishly abroad in all her realm!
How happy should we deem the eyes of those
Who lived to see the glory in their day!
And is it less a miracle than now
We see it every year renewed before us?
And is it less divine because it grows
A thing so common that unthinking hearts
Cease to admire the beauty, and forget,
Or never learn, that He whose word of power
At first created earth, and called it good,
Daily creates and blesses it anew?

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THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Jesus' Boyhood.

By the Rev. Bernard Snell, M.A.

We know very little about the boyhood of the most wonderful boy that ever lived :—

"A Son who never did amiss,
Who never shamed His mother's kiss,
Or crossed her fondest prayer."

Most of us would very much like to know more about the childhood of Christ. We know indeed that he lived not in a great city, but in a little village cupped among the hills; he lived not in a suburban villa, but in a small white house of one storey with flat roof, the floor of hard earth, very little furniture, and no windows, so that if a penny got lost—and there were none to spare!—they had to take a candle to find it. Probably outside there was a millstone where they ground up the wheat and barley. It was a poor house where Christ the Lord grew.

Further than this, we know: first, that Jesus learnt His lessons, because He "increased in wisdom." Did He go to school? Yes: all Jewish boys then went to school, and Joseph took Jesus to school first when He was five years old. Soon after the dawn every morning, Jesus went to the synagogue school. There He learnt His A B C; there He learnt the story of His native land and all the wondrous things that had been done in that neighbourhood where He lived, the Garden of Palestine, the battle-ground of so many great issues in the past. Jesus grew in favour with God and man. I sometimes have heard with shame, "Why have I to learn lessons when there are so many more pleasant things to be done?" Remember, Christ learnt his lessons patiently and quietly.

We have a swift glimpse through the open window as, when twelve years old, He went up to Jerusalem—what a splendid journey it must have been for the boy, all that way to Jerusalem! Joseph and Mary had been before, but not Jesus; and we can easily imagine His glee at this holiday excursion. When the great morning really came at last, the morning of the start to which He had so long looked forward, nearly all the Nazarenes were in their holiday dresses, and the caravan of camels and donkeys wound down the hill. Four whole days the journey took; eighty miles was a long way then. And they passed along a road full of stories; there Deborah had won her great victory, there Saul was killed, there was Dothan where poor Joseph was sold, there were Ebal and Gerizim, the twin mountains, with Shechem between them, and close by were Jacob's well and Joseph's grave. And every morning the "Song of the Ascent" grew louder and more joyous. Then they passed at last over Mount Olivet, singing the psalms they all knew so well by heart: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem, whither the tribes go up," "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces." And I suppose that Joseph showed the wonderful sights of the city to his boy,—the streets crowded with pilgrims to the Festival, David's Tower, the Citadel, and most of all the Cathedral with its gates and courts and terraces, its altars, the choirs and the bands that blew the silver trumpets. And we look through the temple door and see Him sitting in the midst of the wisest men, hearing and asking them questions, and waiting wistfully for the answers; and, I daresay, when Mary His mother came to claim Him, some of the old grey-beards said to her, "Are you the mother of this wonderful boy?" And she would feel proud.

Then again we know this—that when a boy, Jesus worked with His hands. When He grew up to be a man, people said, "Is He not the carpenter?" Yes, He had been a carpenter, and if, as most of us believe, His father died when He was only a boy, and if, as is certain, Jesus was the eldest lad of that small family, the burden of that household rested upon His shoulders, and He had to work very hard to support the home. I suppose that they paid for some of the goods that He made in wool; and Mary the mother wove and dyed the wool into various stuffs. Do not for a moment think that a man is happy if he has no hard work to do. No, the most miserable men in the world at this moment are the men who have not anything to do.

Then we know this, that Jesus "waxed strong in spirit," when a boy: He grew stronger in goodness: not only in wisdom, but in goodness. And I cannot help asking, Are you getting better—not only wiser at school—but are you more diligent, and true, and kind? I think Christ's home must have been a happy home. Why? Because, when a man, He spoke with such loving tenderness of motherhood and childhood. It must have been a happy memory; and the best memory of all was that He had been a good boy.

One other thing I am going to tell you. We are certain that Christ obeyed His parents—quite poor labouring people as they were. I daresay He sometimes tried to find dry sticks for His mother's oven: I daresay He sometimes went to the well to fill the pails, and that sometimes when He was at play He left the game when His mother called Him to go an errand. We read that He was "subject to His parents."

Nothing is more saddening than to see a strong boy rude and disobedient to his mother, who has suffered so much, who has spent so much labour and lavished so much love for his sake. You cannot do too much for your mother; and yet very little things can make her life happy, and very little things can make her miserable. Jesus was not in a hurry to leave His home. He lived with His mother until he was thirty years old. He must have loved her very much.

The other day the boys were coming out of school, and they said, "Let's have some fun." It was all sunshine, and Tom said, "Let's go down to the river; we'll have a boat." George said, "No, I can't. I should like to, but I promised mother that I would'nt go unless there was a teacher with us. And there isn't one." "Oh, rubbish," said the other boy, "I should go, mother or no mother. Come along." "Oh," said George, "I would go right enough perhaps if I had a mother like yours."

"What's that you say?" said Tom. "I've a mother who minds what I do," said George: and he ran off. "Did you hear that?" said Tom to a teacher, "I'll pummel him for saying that my mother was a bad woman; he said my mother wasn't worth caring for." "No, he did not quite say that," said the teacher, "he said that *he* had a mother worth minding; and I must say that I should not like the other kind myself." "But who said my mother was not worth minding?" And the teacher said, "I myself thought that was what you said. Actions speak louder than words." Tom went home thinking hard all the way; and he said to his mother, much to her surprise, "Mother, when you tell me, I am always coming straight home: I am." And, do you know, the next day George did not get that thrashing which he had been promised, and Tom spent a lot of time trying to make George believe that his mother was just as much worth minding as any other boy's mother.

The Music of the Stars.

Oh, lamps of light that hang so high,
While the green fields in shadow lie,
Now softly from the evening sky
Smile down on me.

What is your message, stars of gold,
Set in a glory all untold?
What are the tidings ye unfold
So silently?

There, as ye shine, ye seem to say,
"Little ones all at close of day
Must to the dreamland steal away,
And sink to sleep.

"Birdies are flying to the nest,
Sweet blossoms all with dews are pressed;
Here we will wake the while you rest,
And watch will keep.

"Ours is a host beyond compare,
Nor could you count our numbers e'er;
Such are God's mercies everywhere
Around you laid

"Little ones, listen what we say!
Great is God's glory now and aye;
Tender His love abides alway
Through sun and shade."

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

Friendship is not perfect until the two can walk side by side in perfect silence yet in complete sympathy.

Many people keep their love for God in their pews with their hymn-books and hassocks, and never take it into the street or market-place.

A List of Books for Sunday School Teachers.*

This is a very valuable and long-needed publication. It is a systematic guide to the whole field of Sunday school teaching as carried out in our group of churches. The subject-matter of teaching is classified under the five heads of—(1) Foundatious of Religion, (2) Bible Lessons, (3) Moral Lessons, (4) Unitarianism, (5) Biography. Each of these heads is further sub-divided according to the age of scholars, and a suitable list of books is given in each case, with the price appended. A better-conceived or more practical form of helping the Sunday school teacher we have not seen. The selection of books is excellent, and although some of those allotted to the teacher of older classes will be found to need very thoughtful study, yet we confess we do not see how the matter could be further simplified.

The fourth of the above heads, that of "Unitarianism," receives an appended treatment by Dr. Klein, who has given very clear and full directions for this type of teaching in its various aspects. To make these directions valuable, it was obviously necessary to make them full. This Dr. Klein has done. The result seems to present us with a formidable mass of reading. That it could have been made any simpler we do not affirm; that it is simple enough for the average Sunday school scholar is another matter. However, the work of simplification lies mainly with the teacher, who should take it to heart that the first requisite of teaching is to know more than you intend to teach. The whole work has been evidently well considered as a whole and in all details, and it may be said to present the best guidance that long experience and sound judgment has so far been able to offer in this field. We cordially commend it to ministers in the first instance, suggesting that they should introduce it with all expedition to the notice of Sunday school teachers, with such advice in its use as the situation may seem to demand.

* "A List of Books for Sunday School Teachers." Printed and Published for the Liverpool Sunday School Society. Price Sixpence.